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SUBJECT: SPLM/DARFUR: AMUM REITERATES FOCUS ON REBELS, SUPPORT FOR
CHD

Ref: Khartoum 929

KHARTOUM 00000935 001.2 OF 002

Amum Shares Concerns on Phase 1

¶11. (SBU) Meeting with Acting CG Juba and Poloff on June 13, Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretary General Pagan Amum said that he shared U.S. concerns about the first phase of the SPLM's conference on Darfur. As outlined by the SPLM, phase one would bring together civil society groups, traditional leaders, and Arab representatives (reftel). Amum said that the intention was for the Darfur rebel factions to hear the concerns of these groups, particularly their demands for peace, and be "emboldened" to reflect these views during the negotiation phase. Amum said that some Darfur groups have already objected to this approach and the net effect "may be negative."

¶12. (SBU) Amum acknowledged that inviting Arab leaders associated with some of the atrocities in Darfur, such as notorious Janjaweed leader Musa Hillal, risked alienating the rebel factions and was a "big mistake." He noted that the non-signatories are reluctant to join a process that might appear to absolve the Janjaweed. Amum also said that some of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories feared that the SPLM conference "would pull the rug out from under them" by allowing other groups to claim legitimacy. Amum reiterated that the SPLM's focus should be on facilitating negotiations with the non-signatories and the National Congress Party (NCP). "My central idea was to make it quiet," said Amum. "The goal is for the non-signatories to negotiate. We have no other reason." Now that invitations have been issued to a wide range of participants, Amum said he would try to control the process and "minimize the damage."

¶13. (SBU) Amum criticized the chairman of the SPLM Taskforce on Darfur (TFD) Clement Janda for making "public remarks" about the difficulties of securing the attendance of Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Abdulwahid al-Nur at the conference. The Secretary General said that he had told Janda "you are not a mediator, you are a facilitator." He suggested that the SPLM should focus on "doing everything we can so that he (Abdulwahid) comes" rather than losing leverage by criticizing him.

Eritrea: Breaking the Strategic Siege

¶14. (SBU) Amum expressed some concern that the United Nations/Africa Union-led mediation process conflicted with the "regional mediation"

involving Eritrea, Chad, and Libya. Amum suggested that effective cooperation on the Darfur conflict could improve the contentious bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Eritrea. "I see it as an opportunity," said Amum. He explained that Eritrea was isolated from its neighbors--Ethiopia, Sudan, and Yemen--and wanted to "break its strategic siege." Asmara viewed Sudan as "the weakest link" in this siege and had determined that brokering peace in Darfur would earn Khartoum's gratitude.

SPLM Encourages CHD to Proceed

¶15. (SBU) A representative of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), Theo Murphy, met with Amum just after his meeting with U.S. officials. According to Murphy, Amum reiterated his support for CHD's proposed meeting in Nairobi for the factions of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA). While saying that Presidential Advisor Maghzoub Al Khalifa still objected to bringing rebel leaders outside of Sudan, Amum said that he would serve as a point of contact for the Kenyan Government to confirm the SPLM's support for CHD's effort. Explaining that the SPLM Taskforce had spoken to rebel leaders in Darfur using intermediaries, Amum asked Murphy to put him in direct contact with the field commanders so that he could better explain the SPLM's initiative and address their concerns about the meeting in Southern Sudan. Murphy had met earlier with SPLM Taskforce chairman Janda, who had also voiced support for CHD's initiative. Murphy reported that Janda did not view the Nairobi meeting as conflicting with the SPLM conference and urged CHD to proceed. Janda acknowledged that the logistical difficulties facing both efforts prevent a precise sequencing of the two meetings, and both should go forward.

¶16. (SBU) Comment: There are substantive differences, and a simple lack of coordination, among the various SPLM elements engaged in this process to date. Amum's leadership and close engagement is key, and so is that of SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir--both to keep the

KHARTOUM 00000935 002.2 OF 002

process on track and to minimize SPLM disagreements. We will continue to press both on this urgent priority. End comment.

¶17. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

FERNANDEZ